2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

226 227 *Mamba* are used (*a*) in backwaters of big rivers (*ifishiba*) in March; (*b*) on the flats about 400 feet from the river edge as the waters fall in April and May; (*c*) in the same dikes, with the traps reversed to catch the fish as they leave the main stream to breed in January, if the rain is not so heavy that it sweeps them away at once (*ukucilule mbelo*); (*d*) in the main body of the stream (*umulongo*) in May, in small rivers only.

Large numbers of fish are only caught by the trap method near the big rivers, but a sufficient number of small fish are picked up by the banks of streams to make a welcome variety in the diet.

4. *Weirs* (*icansa*, plur. *ifyansa*). *Mono* traps may also be set in weirs made of sticks and reeds placed across the big streams where there is a certain amount of current driving the fish into the traps (*uku milongo* or *ku mukuku*). These weirs include: (*a*) the permanent variety, such as are found on the Chambesi River in November and December; (*b*) semi-permanent weirs built to last for three years or so, or until the sand sifts up by the current; (*c*) temporary weirs built hurriedly to block up the current in a big river for a fish poisoning expedition, in which case traps are used. A much bigger variety of *mono* traps, about eight feet long and three feet in diameter, known as *banasabila* or *mumange* are used.[1] These weirs are in use in November and December until the crocodiles become a menace to the fishers. Thus the season is limited, but the method is very simple, and many of the larger varieties of fish are caught.

226 [84] 227 286 5. *Nets* (*amasumbu*). In the main body of a river natives catch fish by nets. Unlike the Bisa, who make about eleven different types of fishing net, the Bemba maintain that they only use one, with the occasional addition of small accessory nets (*akalenge*). The nets are made of twisted bark rope (*ulushishi*). The maker first digs up the roots of the *lwimbi* bush and hammers these out, removing the internal fibres. These he dries and then damps again, and finally frays off fine threads which are rolled together between finger and thumb into a very thin string. This latter is rolled on to a ball and used with a wooden threader to tat the net. [435] It is said to take about three months to make a complete net, which is then four feet deep and twenty-five yards long, and sold for about three shillings. Nets are individually owned, and belong to men only.

226 227 The usual method of net fishing is known as *ukusoa*, the word

[1] I saw these used on the Luansenshi and Chambesi.

widely reputed for their iron-working, when during the recent war tools became scarce. It is rarely found among the Bemba. Village smiths able to reforge and sharpen axe-blades and hoes are, however, common all over the area. The Unga obtained iron blades for their fish-spears from the Mukulu. 325

Wood-carving, highly developed among the Congo peoples, is limited among the Bemba to the simplest geometric designs, but Von Rosen noted some elaborate and rather striking carving among the Twa.(1) Weaving is unknown among the Bemba, and is not reported elsewhere. Baskets are generally made well but are not elaborate. For a fishing group the Unga have little variety in baskets and these again are simply made. A certain amount of leather-work is made by the Bemba. Both cooking and eating pots are made all over the plateau, but although they are well made they tend to be badly fired and hence to be fragile. 322 286 285 281 323

Salt-making flourishes particularly among the Shila and Tabwa, around Lake Mweru.(2) It is highly lucrative, compensates for the comparative infertility of the soil and provides a lively marketing activity. The salt is obtained by straining the soil through baskets and boiling the resultant brine. The salt-earth supply in the area is permanent and this tends to have a stabilizing effect upon villages, which would otherwise move frequently in accordance with the practice of shifting cultivation. The natural salt found in the pans at Mpika in Bemba country was also utilized and highly valued, being traded around the country to gratify the longing for salt in which the Bemba diet is singularly lacking. 317

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

KINSHIP

(a) *Matrilineal Descent* is one of the cultural characteristics of this area. Amongst all these people affiliation is traced through the mother and a man belongs to his mother's clan. Succession is within a loosely organised matrilineage of narrow span whereby a man is succeeded by his younger brothers or by his sisters' sons, or by his sisters' daughters' sons. These rules govern succession to chieftainship, to a headmanship, or to the name and status of a dead man by the practice known in this area as *ukupyanika*.(3) A woman usually succeeds to the name of her maternal grandmother and, in the case of a chieftainess, she succeeds to the title itself. Succession to a name is associated with the power to call on the ancestral spirits of the dead man or woman in question. 611

All the peoples described appear to be organized into matrilineal clans with totemic names. Among the Bemba, for instance, there are 40 or more such dispersed exogamous matrilineal clans. The clan claims descent from an original ancestress, a more or less legendary figure dating from the time of the first occupation of their present territory by the Bemba. Clan centres, in the sense of original villages of occupation, are remembered but 614

(1) Von Rosen, 1914. (2) Moore, 1937.
(3) Richards, 9, 1950, describes this as 'positional succession'.